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SUBJECT: SPLA Chief of Staff Disappointed

REF: Khartoum 00902

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The SPLA Chief of Staff, Oyai Deng, is disappointed with the assistance he has received from the USG program to transform his military from a guerilla movement to a professional military. Tired of waiting for the U.S., the SPLA is now proceeding with transformation plans on its own. In particular, Deng cited unfulfilled promises from Dyncorps, the U.S. contractor, to build two training bases, renovate or build a temporary command and control center, provide military trucks, furnish communication equipment, and construct prefabricated housing for SPLA officers. The SPLA is now using existing resources and hiring a private British firm to meet its needs. END SUMMARY.

Deng Expresses Appreciation and Frustration

2. (SBU) In a meeting with Acting Consul General Juba on August 7,

Deng described a series of miscommunications and unfulfilled commitments that has diminished his confidence in both Dyncorps, the USG implementing contractor, and overall U.S. support for the SPLA. He began by explaining his deep appreciation for everything the U.S. had done for the SPLA/M and the South, and said if nothing else were ever done it would be more than enough. That said, Deng explained that military transformation had stalled because he had been relying on the United States to follow through with commitments it made to help transition the SPLA into a professional fighting force.

SPLA Command and Control Center, Housing Needs Unmet

3. (SBU) In particular, Deng discussed several projects over the past year that were meant to be completed in the short term but have not yet begun. One of these projects was the establishment of a temporary command and control center in Juba, which Dyncorps promised to complete. The SPLA initially offered an existing building to be renovated, but were told it was not appropriate and that a new building would be built. The land for this new building was identified long ago, but Deng pointed out that they were still working out of the old, dilapidated building and had no indication when the new offices would be built.

4. (SBU) Deng also said the SPLA had turned down several offers over the past year to build prefab temporary housing for its officers because Dyncorp had agreed to build the SPLA a camp. The officers are currently housed in a commercial tent camp at the cost of USD100 per tent per night. Unable to wait for Dyncorps any longer, the SPLA has purchased 200 tents for a camp to be built near the airport. Hearing that they already purchased the tents, Dyncorps then offered to build the camp infrastructure, including concrete tent pads. It is now almost two months later, and Dyncorps has only fenced the site and drilled two boreholes.

SPLA Training Centers - Perhaps the Brits Instead

¶15. (SBU) Another important project was the building of two training centers for SPLA troops, which he said Dyncorps agreed to do nearly a year ago. After much discussion, it was agreed that the first center would be built in Malau, outside of Rumbek. Although it has been many months, Deng said that virtually nothing has been done at that site (reftel). The SPLA has therefore started training its men with existing resources in several largely undeveloped sites around Southern Sudan. The SPLA has also engaged a private British security firm (NFI) to help support its training mission.

Keep on Trucking...Not

¶16. (SBU) In addition to construction projects, Deng said that the USG had agreed to provide communication equipment and trucks to the SPLA, neither of which have arrived. He says that he has not heard anything on the status of the communications gear, and has heard conflicting stories on the status of the trucks. Initially, he said the SPLA requested heavy, all-terrain Russian military trucks. The SPLA had used similar trucks, provided by Ethiopia, to great success during the war. Deng understood why the USG was unable to purchase the Russian trucks, and then asked for MAN military trucks instead. Deng explained that he has been told both that the trucks were on their way and that the trucks were too expensive and could not be bought. Dyncorps reportedly has offered DAF trucks as an alternative, but Deng said they are unacceptable because of the lack of roads and harsh conditions in Southern Sudan. Deng also refused Isuzu trucks on similar grounds, but said he could use Toyota trucks if the larger trucks were outside the budget. Deng is still waiting for any type of truck to arrive. (Note: The SPLA has purchased several of the Russian trucks on its own. End note.)

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